Attached Accessory Apartment Permits

Assistance Bulletin
#13

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This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Q: What is an Attached Accessory Apartment?

A: An Attached Accessory Apartment is a dwelling unit that meets the following criteria:

- It is in the same dwelling and under the same ownership as a single-family dwelling unit.
- It is intended for use as a complete, independent living facility;.
- It does not substantially alter the single-family character, harmony, and appearance of the dwelling or its conformity with the character of the neighborhood.

Q: What are the benefits of Attached Accessory Apartments?

A: They provide homeowner-occupants, especially senior citizen homeowner-occupants, an opportunity for supplementary income by converting part of their house into a rentable Accessory Apartment. They also provide an affordable, attractive housing option for renters such as people on fixed incomes, senior citizens, and young people just out of school.

Q: Can anyone build an Attached Accessory Apartment?

A: If you are the owner-occupant of a single-family dwelling, you may establish one Attached Accessory Apartment within your home. However, you cannot establish both an Attached and a Detached Accessory Apartment on your lot (see PDS Bulletin #12, Detached Accessory Apartments).

Q: Are there any special requirements for the Attached Accessory Apartment?

A: Yes. An Attached Accessory Apartment must include permanent provisions required by state and local law for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation by not more than one family.

Q: How do I file for an Attached Accessory Apartment Permit?

A: You will be required to submit the following:

- A completed Master Permit Application form.
- A filing fee.
- A site development plan drawn to scale, showing the location of the existing residence on the property including parking, entrances, any proposed additions to the existing residence, and the location of the existing septic system (septic tank and drain field) if applicable.

- A floorplan drawn to scale, which clearly delineates both units to verify compliance with square footage requirements.
- Building elevations if external alterations are proposed.
- A notarized Guarantee of Owner-Occupancy form.

Q: Do I also need a building permit?

A: Yes, you will need a building permit for new construction. You will need a remodel or conversion permit for an existing structure. (See PDS Bulletin #23, Residential Building Permit Process.)

Q: Are there any other requirements?

A: Yes. The Snohomish County Code requires compliance with the following standards in order to qualify for and retain a permit for an Attached Accessory Apartment:

- **Owner occupancy:** The single-family dwelling in which the apartment is to be accessory must be owner-occupied on the date of application for the Attached Accessory Apartment, and remain owner-occupied for as long as the Attached Accessory Apartment exists.

- **Floor area:** The floor area for an Accessory Apartment must be at least 360 square feet. The original single-family dwelling unit must remain at least 900 square feet. (These net floor areas do not include garages, porches, walls and unfinished basements.)

  ⇒ If the net floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is under 2,000 square feet, the net floor area of the Accessory Apartment shall not exceed 40 percent of single-family dwelling unit.

  ⇒ If the net floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is between 2,000 and 3,000 square feet, the net floor area of the Accessory Apartment shall not exceed 35 percent, or 800 square feet of the net area of the dwelling unit, whichever is greater.

  ⇒ If the net floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is between 3,000 and 5,000 square feet, the net floor area of the Accessory Apartment shall not exceed 30 percent, or 1,050 square feet of the net area of the dwelling unit, whichever is greater.

  ⇒ If the net floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is over 5,000 square feet, the net floor area of the Accessory Apartment shall not exceed 20 percent, or 1,500 square feet of the net area of the dwelling unit, whichever is greater.

- **Architectural character:** The architectural character of the single-family dwelling shall be preserved. Exterior materials, roof form, and window spacing and proportion shall match that of the existing single-family dwelling. Only one main entrance shall be permitted on the front (street face) of the dwelling. Entrances for the Attached Accessory Apartment shall be on the side or in the rear of the dwelling.

- **Water system and sewage disposal:** An applicant must provide documentation that the water supply is potable and of adequate flow, and that the sewage or septic system is capable of handling the additional demand that would be placed upon it by the Attached Accessory Apartment.

- **Parking:** One off-street parking space shall be provided and designated for the Attached Accessory Apartment (in addition to the two off-street parking spaces required for the existing single family dwelling unit), and such additional spaces, if any, to accommodate all vehicles owned and used by occupants of the Attached Accessory Apartment. Driveways may be counted as one parking space. No parking areas, other than driveways, shall be created in front yards.

- **Guarantee of Owner Occupancy:** An owner-occupant of a single-family dwelling which includes an Attached Accessory Apartment shall file with PDS each year a Guarantee of Owner Occupancy form (available from PDS).